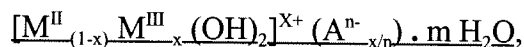


IN THE CLAIMS:

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) A layered double hydroxide (LDH) ~~according to claim 20~~ comprising exchangeably bound anions in intermediate layers and which can be represented by the following formula:



in which

M^{II} is a divalent Ca, Mg, Fe, Ni, Zn, Co, Cu, Mn-metal ion, or 2 Li,

M^{III} is a trivalent Al, Fe, Cr or Mn - metal ion,

A^{n-} is a n-valent nitrate, sulfate, chloride or hydroxide anion in the intermediate layer.

10. (Previously Presented) The LDH of claim 9, wherein the LDH contains up to about 30% by weight nitrate ions.

11. (Previously Presented) A mixture comprising an LDH according to claim 9 in combination with auxiliary materials and additives.

12. (Previously Presented) A mixture comprising an LDH according to claim 9 to which is added an ordinary mixed fertilizer and optionally other fertilizer additives.

13. (Previously Presented) A preparation comprising an LDH according to claim 9, with at least one selected from seeds, seedlings, or propagation material.

14. (Previously Presented) A preparation according to Claim 13, characterized in that the propagation material, seeds, or seedlings in the preparation are coated with the LDH and optionally with other additives.

15. (Currently Amended) A preparation ~~according to~~ wherein the LDH is present in liquid form or in solid form.

16-17. (cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) The LDH of claim 9, wherein the LDH is essentially carbonate-free
the divalent metal ion is Ca, Mg, Fe, Ni, Zn, Co, Cu, or Mn,
the trivalent metal ion is Al, Fe, Cr or Mn,
the anion is sulfate, hydroxide, chloride or nitrate.

19. (Previously Presented) The LDH of claim 15, wherein the solid form is a granulate, a powder or a prill.

20. (Previously Presented) An LDH comprising
at least one intermediate layer, and

M^{II} surrounded by OH^- , with replacement of the bivalent metal ions by M^{III} producing an excess of positive charge, balanced by anions A^{n-} in the intermediate layer, wherein

M^{II} denotes a divalent metal ion or 2 Li, and

M^{III} denotes a trivalent metal ion.

21. (Previously Presented) The LDH of claim 20, wherein the LDH is essentially carbonate-free, and in which
the divalent metal ion is Ca, Mg, Fe, Ni, Zn, Co, Cu or Mn;
the trivalent metal ion is Al, Fe, Cr or Mn;
the anion is sulfate, hydroxide or chloride.

22. (Withdrawn) A method of nitrate removal in purification of water followed by a method of uniform supplying arable land with nitrogen in form of nitrate, comprising the steps of

contacting the water with layered double hydroxides (LDHs) that reversibly exchange nitrate wherein the LDHs comprise at least one intermediate layer, and

M^{II} surrounded by OH^- , with replacement of the bivalent metal ions by M^{III} producing an excess of positive charge, balanced by anions A^{n-} in the intermediate

layer, wherein

M^{II} denotes a divalent metal ion or 2 Li,

M^{III} denotes a trivalent metal ion,

A^n denotes an anion bound in the intermediate layer;

and

applying the LDHs that reversibly exchange nitrate as fertilizer and soil conditioner for the uniform supplying of arable land with nitrogen in the form of nitrate,

wherein both the contacting and applying steps are performed using the same LDHs.

23. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising layered double hydroxides (LDHs) according to claim 20, wherein the LDHs contain anions exchangeably bound in intermediate layers.

24. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 23, wherein the LDHs are substantially carbonate-free, and in which

the divalent metal ion is Ca, Mg, Fe, Ni, Zn, Co, Cu or Mn;

the trivalent metal ion is Al, Fe, Cr or Mn;

the anion is sulfate, hydroxide, chloride or nitrate.

25. (Previously Presented) The LDH of claim 20, wherein A^n is nitrate.

26. (Previously Presented) The LDH of claim 20, wherein A^n is sulfate.

27. (Previously Presented) The LDH of claim 20, wherein A^n is chloride.

28. (Previously Presented) The LDH of claim 20, wherein A^n is hydroxide.